

Herseth Sandlin Statement in Response to the Proposed USDA Rule on Livestock Competition

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Washington, DC (June 24, 2010)-U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin released the following statement today in response to U.S Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) proposed rule regarding livestock competition.

Herseth Sandlin said, "The Packers and Stockyards Act has not been adequately examined since its inception in 1921. The existing rules are outdated and broad, and they simply don't do enough to ensure fairness for our producers. This proposed rule will help protect South Dakota producers against unfair and fraudulent practices from meatpacking companies and create a more level playing field."

USDA published the proposed rule on June 22, 2010, which was required as part of the 2008 Farm Bill under the Packers & Stockyards Act and through USDA's existing rulemaking authority. Among other provisions, the rule would institute standards to identify when meatpackers have granted unreasonable preference to a particular group. It would prohibit two or more meatpackers from using a single cattle buyer to obtain cattle. And it would prohibit meatpackers from trading cattle among themselves.

The Farmers Union, Stockgrowers Association and Cattlemen Association have all signaled their support of the proposed rule.

Herseth Sandlin played a key role in the drafting 2008 Farm Bill, and has begun the planning and information gathering for the next reauthorization. Earlier this year, Herseth Sandlin hosted a bipartisan group of 11 members of the U.S. House Agriculture Committee for a field hearing in Sioux Falls designed to gather input directly from South Dakotans on the 2012 Farm Bill. The hearing was held at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, and included testimony from a range of South Dakotans representing diverse agricultural and rural interests, including grain production, biofuels and forestry products.

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